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Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[*without reference to a Main Committee (A/59/L.26/Rev.1 and Add.1)*]

59/212. International cooperation on humanitarian assistance in the field of natural disasters, from relief to development

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming its resolution 46/182 of 19 December 1991, the annex to which contains the guiding principles for the strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations system, as well as all its resolutions on international cooperation on humanitarian assistance in the field of natural disasters, from relief to development, and recalling the resolutions of the humanitarian segments of the substantive sessions of the Economic and Social Council,

Recognizing the importance of the principles of neutrality, humanity and impartiality for the provision of humanitarian assistance,

Emphasizing that the affected State has the primary responsibility in the initiation, organization, coordination and implementation of humanitarian assistance within its territory and in the facilitation of the work of humanitarian organizations in mitigating the consequences of natural disasters,

Emphasizing also the importance of integrating risk reduction into all phases of disaster management, development planning and post-disaster recovery,

Emphasizing further, in this context, the important role of development organizations in supporting national efforts to mitigate the consequences of natural disasters,

Emphasizing the responsibility of all States to undertake disaster preparedness, response and mitigation efforts in order to minimize the impact of natural disasters, while recognizing the importance of international cooperation in support of the efforts of affected countries which may have limited capacities to fulfil this requirement,

Welcoming the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction,

Stressing that national authorities need to enhance the resilience of populations to disasters through, inter alia, implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction so as to reduce risks to people, their livelihoods, the social and economic infrastructure and environmental resources,

Taking into account the outcome of the Second International Conference on Early Warning, held in Bonn, Germany, from 16 to 18 October 2003, under the auspices of the United Nations,

Welcoming the efforts undertaken in preparation for the World Conference on Disaster Reduction, to be held in Kobe, Japan, from 18 to 22 January 2005, and underlining the importance of this conference in the promotion of new efforts in the field of disaster risk reduction,

Noting the critical role played by local resources, as well as by existing in-country capacities, in natural disaster response and risk management,

Recognizing the significant role played by national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies, as part of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, in disaster preparedness and risk reduction, disaster response, rehabilitation and development,

Emphasizing the importance of raising awareness among developing countries of the capacities existing at the national, regional and international levels that could be deployed to assist them,

Noting the lack of progress made in finalizing the establishment of the Directory of Advanced Technologies for Disaster Response as a new part of the Central Register of Disaster Management Capacities[1] as requested in its resolution 58/25 of 5 December 2003,

Emphasizing the importance of international cooperation in support of the efforts of the affected States in dealing with natural disasters in all their phases, including prevention, preparedness, mitigation and recovery and reconstruction, and of strengthening the response capacity of affected countries,

Recognizing that efforts to achieve economic growth, sustainable development and internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, can be adversely affected by natural disasters, and noting the positive contribution that those efforts can make in strengthening the resilience of populations to such disasters,

Welcoming the efforts of Member States, with facilitation by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat and in cooperation with the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group, to improve efficiency and effectiveness in the provision of international urban search and rescue assistance, and, in this context noting its resolution 57/150 of 16 December 2002 entitled "Strengthening the effectiveness and coordination of international urban search and rescue assistance",

Encouraging, in this regard, efforts aimed at strengthening the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group and its regional groups, particularly through the participation in their activities of representatives of a larger number of countries,

Mindful of the effects that shortfalls in resources can have on the preparedness for and response to natural disasters, and underscoring, in this regard, the need to gain a more precise understanding of the impact of levels of funding on natural disaster response,

[1] Available from http://ocha.unog.ch/cr/.

Underlining the need for further improvement in information and analyses available regarding needs, responses and funding related to natural disasters,

1. *Takes note* of the reports of the Secretary-General entitled "International cooperation on humanitarian assistance in the field of natural disasters, from relief to development"[2] and "Strengthening the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations";[3]

2. *Expresses its deep concern* at the high number and the scale of natural disasters and their increasing impact, resulting in massive losses of life and property worldwide, in particular in vulnerable societies lacking adequate capacity to mitigate effectively the long-term negative social, economic and environmental consequences of natural disasters;

3. *Calls upon* all States to adopt, where required, and to continue to implement effectively necessary legislative and other appropriate measures to mitigate the effects of natural disasters and integrate disaster risk reduction strategies into development planning, inter alia, by disaster prevention, including appropriate land-use and building regulations, as well as disaster preparedness and capacity-building in disaster response and mitigation, and requests the international community to continue to assist developing countries as well as countries with economies in transition, bearing in mind their vulnerability to natural hazards, in this regard;

4. *Stresses*, in this context, the importance of strengthening international cooperation, particularly through the effective use of multilateral mechanisms, in the provision of humanitarian assistance through all phases of a disaster, from relief and mitigation to development, including the provision of adequate resources;

5. *Also stresses* that humanitarian assistance for natural disasters should be provided in accordance with and with due respect for the guiding principles contained in the annex to resolution 46/182 and should be determined on the basis of the human dimension and needs arising out of the particular natural disasters;

6. *Recognizes* that economic growth and sustainable development contribute to improving the capacity of States to mitigate, respond to and prepare for natural disasters;

7. *Reaffirms* that disaster risk analysis and vulnerability reduction form an integral part of humanitarian assistance, poverty eradication and sustainable development strategies and need to be considered in the development plans of all vulnerable countries and communities, including, where appropriate, in plans relating to post-disaster recovery and the transition from relief to development, and affirms that within such preventive strategies, disaster preparedness and early warning systems must be further strengthened at the country and regional levels, inter alia, through better coordination among relevant United Nations bodies and cooperation with Governments of affected countries and regional and other relevant organizations with the aim of maximizing the effectiveness of natural disaster response and reducing the impact of natural disasters, particularly in developing countries;

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[2] A/59/374.

[3] A/59/93-E/2004/74.

8. *Emphasizes* the importance of the outcome of the Twenty-eighth International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, held in Geneva from 2 to 6 December 2003;

9. *Also emphasizes* the importance of enhanced international cooperation, including through the United Nations and regional organizations, to assist developing countries in their efforts to build local and national capacities and to effectively and efficiently predict, prepare for and respond to natural disasters;

10. *Stresses* the need for partnerships among Governments, organizations of the United Nations system, relevant humanitarian organizations and specialized companies to promote training to strengthen preparedness for and response to natural disasters;

11. *Calls upon* States, the United Nations and other relevant actors, as appropriate, to assist in addressing knowledge gaps in disaster management and risk reduction by identifying ways of improving systems and networks for the collection and analysis of information on disasters, vulnerability and risk to facilitate informed decision-making;

12. *Stresses* the need to promote the access to and transfer of technology and knowledge related to early warning systems and to mitigation programmes to developing countries affected by natural disasters;

13. *Encourages* the further use of space-based and ground-based remote-sensing technologies for the prevention, mitigation and management of natural disasters, where appropriate;

14. *Also encourages* in such operations the sharing of geographical data, including remotely sensed images and geographic information system and global positioning system data, among Governments, space agencies and relevant international humanitarian and development organizations, as appropriate, and notes in that context initiatives such as those undertaken by the International Charter on Space and Major Disasters and the Global Disaster Information Network;

15. *Stresses* that particular international cooperation efforts should be undertaken to enhance and broaden further the utilization of national and local capacities, including within the framework of the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group, and, where appropriate, of regional and subregional capacities of developing countries for disaster preparedness and response, which may be made available in closer proximity to the site of a disaster, more efficiently and at lower cost;

16. *Recognizes*, in this regard, that the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination system continues to be a valuable tool by which disaster management expertise is made available by Member States to respond to the sudden onset of emergencies;

17. *Urges* Member States, with the support of relevant bodies of the United Nations system, to strengthen efforts to identify practical ways to channel resources to and strengthen support for national disaster management capacities in disaster-prone countries;

18. *Welcomes* the role of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat as the focal point within the overall United Nations system for the promotion and coordination of disaster responses among United Nations humanitarian agencies and other humanitarian partners;

19. *Takes note with interest* of the initiatives taken by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the United Nations Development Programme for the establishment of regional positions of disaster response advisers and disaster reduction advisers to assist developing countries in capacity-building for disaster prevention, preparedness, mitigation and response in a coordinated and complementary manner;

20. *Encourages* further cooperation between the United Nations system and regional organizations in order to increase the capacity of these organizations to respond to natural disasters;

21. *Encourages* States that have not acceded to or ratified the Tampere Convention on the Provision of Telecommunication Resources for Disaster Mitigation and Relief Operations, adopted at Tampere, Finland, on 18 June 1998, to consider doing so;

22. *Reiterates its request* that the Secretary-General, in collaboration with the relevant organizations and partners, finalize the establishment of, and then update periodically, the Directory of Advanced Technologies for Disaster Response as a new part of the Central Register of Disaster Management Capacities;[1]

23. *Encourages* donors to consider the importance of ensuring that assistance in the case of higher-profile natural disasters does not come at the expense of those that may have a relatively lower profile, bearing in mind that the allocation of resources should be driven by needs, as well as the importance of making efforts to increase the level of assistance for disaster reduction and preparedness programmes and for disaster response and mitigation activities;

24. *Requests* the Secretary-General to examine ways to further improve the assessment of needs and responses and to enhance the availability of data regarding funding in response to natural disasters and to consider concrete recommendations to improve the international response to natural disasters, as necessary, based on his examination, keeping in mind also the need to address any geographical and sectoral imbalances and shortfalls in such responses, where they exist, as well as the more effective use of national emergency response agencies, and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its sixtieth session.

74th plenary meeting
20 December 2004